

## Message Text

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USMISSION EC BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
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AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 013666

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:EEC, PFOR

SUBJECT: US/EC PRESIDENCY DIALOGUE - JANUARY 25-26 EC NINE  
POLITICAL DIRECTORS MEETING (MIDDLE EAST)

REF: LONDON 00262  
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1. FURTHER TO SEPTELS, EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO CONVEY  
THE FOLLOWING ANALYSIS OF INTER-ARAB POLITICS AND A  
PEACE SETTLEMENT TO BRITISH PRESIDENCY.
2. BEGIN ANALYSIS: DEVELOPMENTS OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS  
HAVE ENABLED THE ARAB SIDE TO RE-ESTABLISH A MODICUM OF

UNITY, WHICH HAD BROKEN DOWN SEVERELY OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS. IN PARTICULAR, EGYPT AND SYRIA, THE TWO PRINCIPAL ACTORS IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS HAVE BEGUN TO SEEK RECONCILIATION. THE PRINCIPAL FACTORS BEHIND THIS PHENOMENON DERIVE (A) FROM RECOGNITION OF THE NEED TO END THE LEBANON CIVIL WAR AND (B) FROM KNOWLEDGE THAT RECONCILIATION WAS NECESSARY IF THE ARABS WERE TO BE IN POSITION TO DEAL WITH THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION IN LAUNCHING A NEGOTIATING INITIATIVE EARLY IN 1977.

DESPITE THEIR DIFFERENCES, BOTH SYRIA AND EGYPT RECOGNIZED THAT NEITHER COULD SHAPE A SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATING STRATEGY WITHOUT THE OTHER AND THAT THEIR CONTINUED FEUDING PLAYED INTO THE HANDS OF THOSE WHO OPPOSE A NEGOTIATED ARAB-ISRAELI AGREEMENT.

THE CATALYST FOR THE RECONCILIATION WAS NEITHER EGYPT NOR SYRIA BUT SAUDI ARABIA. IN ACHIEVING AT THE RIYYDH SUMMIT A FORMULA FOR ENDING THE FIGHTING IN LEBANON ACCEPTABLE TO ALL THE MAJOR PARTIES INVOLVED, IT RE-ESTABLISHED UNITY IN THE ARAB RANKS SUFFICIENTLY TO SET THE STAGE FOR THE NEW ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS WHICH ALL THE PARTICIPANTS ARE EXPECTING AND WHICH REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE PREPARATION ON THEIR PART.

ARAB DESIDERATA IN A SETTLEMENT.

FROM THE ARAB POINT OF VIEW, SETTLEMENT OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUT MUST ASSUAGE THE INJUSTICE OF THE CREATION  
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OF A ZIONIST STATE ON ARAB SOIL, COMPOUNDED BY ISRAEL'S ADDITIONAL TERRITORIAL ACQUISITIONS IN THE 1967 WAR. ARAB ATTITUDES TOWARD ISRAEL HAVE COME A LONG WAY SINCE 1948 OR EVEN 1967. BUT WHAT IT WILL TAKE TO MITIGATE THE PERCEIVED INJUSTICE OF ISRAEL'S CREATION STILL VARIES WIDELY ON THE ARAB SIDE.

AT ONE POLE ARE THE REJECTIONISTS -- IRAQ, LIBYA, SOUTH YEMEN, AND THE PALESTINIAN REJECTIONIST FRONT -- WHICH WILL ACCEPT NOTHING SHORT OF TOTALLY DISMANTLING ISRAEL. BECAUSE THIS EXTREME POSITION REPRESENTS THE ARAB CAUSE IN ITS "PUREST FORM," ACCEPTANCE OF ANYTHING LESS EXPOSES MODERATE ARAB LEADERS TO CHARGES OF "SELLING OUT."

AT THE OTHER POLE ARE THOSE ARAB STATES PRINCIPALLY INVOLVED EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. THEY APPEAR READY TO REACH AN ACCOMMODATION WITH ISRAEL THAT WOULD RECOGNIZE THE RIGHT OF ISRAEL TO EXIST AS A STATE WITHIN RECOGNIZED BORDERS. THEY HAVE AT

LEAST RECOGNIZED THAT THEY CANNOT DRIVE ISRAEL AWAY BY FORCE AND ARE AT A MINIMUM PREPARED TO LET IT EXIST AMONG THEM, PERHAPS IN THE VAGUE EXPECTATION THAT IN THE MORE DISTANT FUTURE IT WILL CHANGE ITS FORM OR SUCCUMB TO WHAT THEY CONCEIVE OF AS ITS INTERNAL WEAKNESSES. THEY ARE PREPARED TO LET IT EXIST, HOWEVER, ONLY IN RETURN FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ARAB TERRORITIES OCCUPIED IN 1967 AND ISRAELI RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING TERRITORIAL RIGHTS.

DESPITE AGREEMENT ON THESE GENERAL AIMS, HOWEVER, THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN HOW EACH STATE AND THE PALESTINIANS DEFINE THEIR PRIORITIES.

-- EGYPT

SADAT WANTS TO BE RELIEVED OF THE POLITICAL ,MILITARY AND  
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ECONOMIC BURDEN OF THE ARAB-ISRAEL PROBLEM IN ORDER TO DEVOTE EGYPT'S RESOURCES TO ITS OWN DEVELOPMENT. HE WANTS TO GO DOWN IN EGYPTIAN HISTORY AS THE LEADER WHO BEGAN THE SERIOUS ATTACK ON THE HUMAN PROBLEMS THAT HAVE AFFLICTED THE POVERTY-STRICKEN PEOPLE OF EGYPT.

MOREOVER, DESPITE SADAT'S "EGYPT FIRST" EMPHASIS AND HIS COUNTRY'S RECENT ISOLATION AND LOSS OF PRESTIGE BECAUSE OF ITS POLICY DURING THE LEBANON CRISIS, EGYPT STILL CONSIDERS ITSELF THE MOST POWERFUL ARAB NEGOTIATOR. THUS, EGYPTIANS WILL HAVE TO MAINTAIN A NEGOTIATING POSITION BEFITTING THEIR STATURE AND, ESPECIALLY AFTER SINAI II, WILL NOT BE INCLINED TO ALLOW PAROCHIAL EGYPTIAN REQUIREMENTS TO BE MET BY TERMS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THE OTHER ARABS

-- SYRIA

FOR ASAD, THE CALCULATED RISK OF HIS POLICY TOWARD LEBANON HAS PAID OFF. LOOKING BEYOND LEBANON, THEREFORE, ASAD IS PREPARED FOR RENEWED ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE NEGOTIATIONS, BUT HE WILL FEEL LESS PRESSURE TO MOVE INTO A NEGOTIATING SITUATION WITH WHICH HE IS NOT COMFORTABLE.

TO BUTTRESS THE SYRIAN NEGOTIATING STRATEGY AND THEREBY ENTER THE NEGOTIATIONS AS EGYPT'S EQUAL PARTNER ASAD IS TRYING TO DRAW JORDAN (BY PERSUASION) AND THE PALESTINIANS (BY FORCE) UNDER HIS INFLUENCE. ASAD HAS BEEN COURTING THE JORDANIANS FOR SOME MONTHS NOW. SOME STATEMENT OF CLOSER POLITICAL TIES PROBABLY WILL BE ISSUED SOON, ALTHOUGH THE PROSPECTS FOR ANY REAL UNION ARE DIM.

-- SAUDI ARABIA

THE VOICE OF THE SAUDIS HAS BECOME VERY POWERFUL IN ARAB AFFAIRS IN RECENT MONTHS, AS EVIDENCED BY THEIR ROLE IN BRINGING ABOUT A SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN RECONCILIATION OUT OF CONFIDENTIAL

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THE LEBANESE CRISIS. ALTHOUGH THEY DO NOT CONSIDER THEMSELVES DIRECT NEGOTIATING PARTNERS, THEIR APPROVAL IS PROBABLY CRUCIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF ANY PEACE PROPOSAL.

-- JORDAN

ALTHOUGH A CONFRONTATION STATE, JORDAN WILL PLAY A SECONDARY ROLE IN THE SETTLEMENT PROCESS. INDEED, WITH THE PLO ACCEPTED BY THE ARABS AS THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE PALESTINIANS, JORDAN'S ROLE IN NEGOTIATING ON THE WEST BANK ISSUE HAS DECLINED EVEN FURTHER.

TRADITIONALLY, JORDAN'S FREEDOM OF ACTION IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE HAS BEEN GREATEST WHEN SYRIA AND EGYPT HAVE BEEN AT ODDS AND BOTH HAVE COURTED JORDAN TO OFFSET THE OTHER. ASSUMING A UNIFIED EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN STRATEGY, HOWEVER, WHICH IS A BASIC ASSUMPTION FOR SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS, JORDAN WILL NOT HAVE A MAJOR VOICE IN THE PROCESS. AS A RESULT, KING HUSAYN WILL PLACE A HIGH VALUE ON JORDAN'S NEW ASSOCIATION WITH SYRIA AS A MEANS OF ENHANCING HIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE PEACE PROCESS AND, AT THE SAME TIME, INSURING AGAINST A SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN RAPPROCHEMENT TO THE DETRIMENT OF JORDAN.

-- THE PALESTINIANS

AS THE PERSONIFICATION OF THE ARAB CAUSE, SUPPORT FOR THE PALESTINIANS HAS BEEN THE "LITMUS TEST" OF ANY REGIME'S DEVOTION TO ARABISM. THIS HAS ENABLED THE PLO TO ATTAIN A DEGREE OF POLITICAL MANEUVERABILITY THAT ITS LANDLESS AND FINANCIALLY DEPENDENT STATUS WOULD OTHERWISE NOT ALLOW.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PLO'S POLITICAL POWER IN THE ARAB WORLD IS RESTRICTED LARGELY TO THE ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM. WHERE THE PLO HAS BECOME HEAVILY INVOLVED IN THE DOMESTIC  
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POLITICS OF AN ARAB STATE, AS IN JORDAN IN 1970 AND IN

LEBANON IN 1975-76, THEY HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO RETALIA-  
TION BY AN ARAB GOVERNMENT.

THE PLO, FAR FROM BEING A MONOLITHIC ORGANIZATION, IS  
ITSELF DIVIDED INTO WARRING FACTIONS. THE GREATEST  
SPLIT IS THAT BETWEEN THE REJECTIONIST FRONT, WHOSE  
MEMBERS REJECT ANY COMPROMISE IN SEEKING TO REGAIN ALL OF  
PALESTINE, AND THE PLO MAINSTREAM WHICH PRIVATELY, BUT  
NOT YET PUBLICLY, GIVES INDICATIONS THAT IT WOULD  
ACCEPT A SOLUTION INVOLVING RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL. THUS,  
EVEN THOUGH THE PLO HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED BY THE ENTIRE  
ARAB WORLD AS THE SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIAN  
PEOPLE, ITS FRAGMENTATION WOULD PRECLUDE ACTIVE PARTICIPA-  
TION IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AT THIS TIME.  
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